

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

*Allah's wish is but to remove uncleanness far from you,
O Ahlal-Bait and cleanse you with a thorough cleansing.*

III

SHIAISM AND SHIAS

THIRD STEP

FOURTEEN INNOCENTS

M. A. SHARIATI

Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation,
and reason with them in the better way.

(*The Quran : xvi—125*)

SHIAISM AND SHIAS

THIRD STEP

FOURTEEN INNOCENTS

BY

M. A. SHARIATI

Husainia, Belalabad,

Moghbar, Dacca.

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NOTE

Unlike the First Step, a marginal price has been fixed for this and other Steps. Reason being that, as our fund wholly depends upon generous donations we want to be self supported so that neither the lack of fund discourage us to take any further Step nor our work be burden to our generous patrons in future. We want to see the machinery just in rolling with its self-generative-energy.

18th Zilhijja, 1376 A. H. }

Dacca.

AUTHOR.

To
my young friends
BOYS AND GIRLS
AS A TOKEN OF
AFFECTION & REGARDS
&
WITH WISHES FOR
HAPPY & PROSPEROUS LIFE
TO THEM
THIS BOOK
IS
Dedicated.

PREFACE

Shiaism and Shias, Second Step is in press while the Third Step, dealing exclusively with the "Fourteen Innocents", is strangely in hand. The reason being that the subject matter of this Step is undoubtedly a part of the chapter of Imamate in the Second Step, but the author is afraid that the long details of the lives of the Fourteen Innocents may disconnect the following chapter of Mi'ad. Hence out of the chapter of Imamate this interesting Third Step has been carved out.

The aims of this Step is to give to our learned readers in general and to our young friends in particular a short but vivid narrative of the life-sketches of all the Fourteen Innocents from the Prophet of Islam right upto the Twelfth Imam. To attain to this object was a difficult task and it needed a rigid censorship in choosing all important events of respective Innocents. Thanks to Almighty that I

have attained to my objects. Great pains have been taken to avoid such expressions which would be likely to wound the feelings of any religious body.

The style in this book aims at being simple but not childish.

In conclusion, I can only add that I am conscious as any one can be of the many shortcomings of this book. I have done my best to get rid of mistakes with the aid of friends who have been so good as to help me. Some difference of opinion are likely to crop up as regards some facts between the learned readers and the author, and it will be highly appreciated if those readers take the pains to point out to the author so that he may justify his ideas.

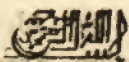
DACCA,
18th Zilhijja, 1376 A.H. }
(17th July, 1957)

M. A. Shariati.

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OUR PROPHET

I have already given you a short sketch of the life of our Prophet while dealing with the subject in the First and Second Steps under the heading "The Birth of Shiaism." Herein I like to deal with Prophet's life sketch chronologically from his birth to death.

Before I start, I deem it essential to explain the Pre-Islamic calendar which is generally called "Aamul Pheel" and which is significantly connected with the early days of the holy Prophet.

Aamul Pheel—The Pre-Islamic calendar began from the day on which an army, under the command of Abraha, an Abyssinian Commander-in-Chief carrying heavy arms and elephants came to Mecca with the intention to destroy Kaaba, which was a sacred and holy place of worship for all the Arabs since a long time. Since the Arabs had not seen elephant before they called the army, "Elephant-Army" and remembered the year of attack as "Aamu Pheel" which means,

the year of attack on Mecca by Elephants.

Though the Abyssinian Army could not succeed

in its plan, the date of the battle became a landmark in the Arab calendar from which future historical events were chronicled, e. g.,

(a) They mentioned that a certain structure was built in Aamul Pheel (b) There was a very

big famine in Aamul Pheel (c) There was great

flood in Aamul Pheel. Now we can clearly under-

stand what I mean by Aamul Pheel. Our

Prophet was born just fifty days after the above

army's attack that is to say in the beginning of

Aamul Pheel. The above calendar was current

upto the Migration of our Prophet, and even

after this event certain Muslim Arabs used to

follow this very calendar until the Second Caliph,

Omar changed and replaced it by the Islamic

calendar which started from our Prophet's Migra-

tion. Therefore, I shall divide the Prophet's

life sketch into two parts—one falling in the Pre-

Islamic calendar, Aamul Pheel and the other into

the Islamic calendar i. e., the Hijri era.

His Life.

Our Prophet Hazrat Mohammad was born on the 50th day of Aamul Pheel I. His father was

Abdullah, who belonged to the Hashemite branch and his mother, Amina to a Quraish tribe. Six months before his birth his father, Abdullah died on his way from Medina to Mecca and was buried there. Since he was a p sthomous child he was looked after by his mother and grand-father, Abdul Mutallib, a famous and well known personality in Arabia and Islamic history. When Hazrat Mohammad was eight years old his grand-father, Abdul Mutallib, died in Mecca and was buried there. In accordance with Abdul Mutallib's will Abu Taalib, the father of Hazrat Ali, and elder son of Abdul Mutallib began to look after our Prophet. During this period a famous war of Arabia called 'Harb-e-Fujjar' took place.

When he was twelve years old the Second Fujjar War began. In these years he had travelled with his guardian and uncle Abu Taalib to Syria.

When he was thirteen years old the Third Fujjar War began and ended, and an agreement of unity among all Quraish Arabs was signed. Since the leader of this pact were three or four persons named Fazl, this agreement is called Halful Fozool (swearing of Fazls) and our

Prophet Mohammad, although young, was one of the important figures of this agreement.

When he was seventeen years old he (with his uncle Zubair, son of Abdul Mutallib, and Abbas) (travelled to Yemen) for the purpose of business.

When he was twenty-five years old he made a contract with a well known, rich lady named Khadija to act as her representative, and took her merchandise to Syria and made good profit. On his return from Syria Khadija finding him an honest, and active young man, belonging to a respectable family of Arabia offered to marry him, and eventually our Prophet took her as his first wife. He was twenty-five years and Khadija was forty years old at that time.

When he was thirty years old, Kaaba, the sacred Mosque which was damaged by floods was pulled down to be rebuilt anew and Mohammad took a major part in it, and was called upon to reinstate in its original place, the holy Stone, Hajrul-Aswad—an event of great importance in the tradition of the history of Arabia.

When he was forty years old he received orders from Allah to start preaching and to invite people to Islam. First he had to call his relatives and then the Arabs and lastly the rest of

the world. Thus he declared : I am a Messenger of Allah and my message is to prohibit idolatry in all forms by saying and believing that "There is no God except One Allah." He called them to unity in belief and action and in every aspect of social and moral life. The first to accept this call was Khadija who was his wife, followed by Ali.

When he was forty-four years old he invited all the Quraish and Hashemite leaders and delivered his message to them and offered that whosoever would promise to help him in every difficulty would be made his vizier and his Caliph. After hearing this short sermon Ali stood up and offered himself for help. From this year Mohammad as a forty-four year old man started to bring home his mission to the disconcerted Arabs and Ali as a fourteen year old young man followed him as his shadow and fulfilled his promise. When he was forty-seven years old the Quraish infidels boycotted Bani Hashim to stop the Prophet's preaching but they could not succeed. When he was fifty years old his great helper, kind uncle and guardian, Abu Taalib died and a few months later his sincere and faithful believer, his beloved wife also departed and these two deaths encouraged the Quraish more

to thwart his mission. Further they tried to torture Muslims by putting difficulties in their way. Finding no way out Hazrat Mohammad asked his followers to migrate to Abyssinia. This was the first migration of the Muslims. When he was fifty-one years old a mission from Medina came to Mecca for private purposes and assured him of its allegiance and help, and Mohammad accepted its invitation conditionally, when its members assured him that all the people of Medina were in unison with the request of the mission. Their mission returned to Medina to prepare a second trip to Mecca and when Hazrat Mohammad was fifty-two years old the second mission formed of all the representatives of all tribes of Medina came to Mecca and reiterated its former year's allegiance and Hazrat Mohammad accepted the invitation and promised that he would go to Medina as soon as circumstances permitted. From that day Hazrat Mohammad invited the Muslims to migrate to Medina but when the Quraishite leaders came to know that Hazrat Mohammad was preparing another centre for his divine mission they tried their best to put off the light of Islam but as the maxim goes 'Man proposes God disposes.'

They planned to kill Mohammad but our Prophet got an order from Allah to leave Mecca and reside permanently in Medina. Therefore, Hazrat Mohammad also planned to migrate and left Hazrat Ali in Mecca to execute his affairs and clear all dues and return all trust money to the people concerned and then to migrate to Medina. According to this plan Hazrat Mohammad left Mecca in the month of Safar and reached Medina on the fourth of Rabi-ul Awwal when he completed his fiftythird year and started his fifty-fourth year.

The Islamic calendar starts from this day. Now, we shall mention important events of the new calendar called Hijri. In the first year of Hijrat when all Muslims of Mecca migrated to Medina and were known as Mohajirs, Hazrat Mohammad created a bond of fraternity between these people and the people of Medina known as Ansars. In this year the Prophet built a Mosque on the outskirts of Medina, called Quaba and another in the town. In the second year of Hijrat he married his daughter Fatima to Hazrat Ali and from this year began the war between Hazrat Mohammad and the infidels. Before this year Muslims used to face the holy

mosque of Palestine during prayer but by order of Allah, Mohammad turned his face towards Mecca and from that day Mecca became the centre of Islamic World.

In this year Muslims were ordered to fast during the month of Ramazan. In the same year began the first war between the Prophet and infidels of Mecca. This war was called Badr. It ended in the defeat of the infidels. In this year Musalmans were ordered to give Zakat e-fitr (per capita tax) and also Zakat as capital tax. They had to say the Eid prayer on the 10th of Zilhajja and also offer sacrifice on the same day.

In the third year of Hijrat, Imam Hasan was born] and the second war with the infidels began and ended in great loss to Muslims. In the fourth year Imam Husain was born and from this year the Muslims were ordered to give up wine. In the fifth year there was the fourth war between the Muslims and infidels called the Khandak and in this year Muslim women were ordered not to mix freely with men and muslims were also ordered to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. In the seventh year there were many fights between muslims and non muslims and in the

fourth quarter of this year there was a Treaty between Muslims and infidels. This was called the Treaty of Hodaybiya. There was another war which is very famous. It is called the war of Khayber. This was between Jews and Muslims. In this war the Jews surrendered and accepted to pay tax to the Islamic government and remain citizens of the Islamic State. After return from this war Muslims were ordered to give Khums $\frac{1}{5}$ as income tax. In this year Muslims were again ordered to give up the drinking of wine, its making and all other kinds of dealings in wine. In the seventh year of Hijra, the prophet prepared a seal for himself with the inscription 'Muhammad un Rasulullah'. He by letter and message invited the Iranian king and the Syrians and Egyptians to embrace Islam. In this year the Prophet with his companions entered Mecca peacefully for pilgrimage being their first pilgrimage after migration. In the eighth year war was again declared between the prophet and infidels of Mecca. In this war Mecca had been declared as an open city and the Muslim armies entered Mecca and the infidels were entirely defeated except for a few persons who insisted on attack. All citizens of Mecca surrendered and

the majority of them accepted Islam and offered allegiance to Muhammad in co-operating with other Muslims in peace and war. In this year under the command of Hazrat Ali our Prophet sent a mission to Yemen to call it to accept Islam. Ali succeeded in the mission and all Yemenites became Muslims. In this year Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet from his wife Maria, was born. In the ninth year Hazrat Ali was ordered to go towards a tribe called Ty to preach Islam. In this year also was declared the war of Tabouk on the border of Arabia and Syria between the Prophet and the Byzantine armies from Syria and in the fourth year Mohammad was ordered to declare that infidels could not enter the Holy Mosque in Mecca and this order was delivered to them by Ali.

In the 10th Hijra era our Prophet went to Mecca on pilgrimage and ordered all Muslims to be present in this pilgrimage. On the 9th or 10th of Zilhajja in Arafat in the Holy Mosque, Hazrat Mohammad delivered a short sermon before the Muslims in general and asked them to be kind to all, specially to their wives and slaves. It runs as follows : 'Ye People ! listen to my words with understanding for I know not

whether after this year I shall ever be amongst you in this place.'

Re : **Muslim, property and life.**

'Your life and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord ; as this day and this month is sacred for all and remember ye shall have to appear before your Lord, Who shall demand from you an account of all your actions.'

Re : **Inheritance.**

'The Lord has prescribed to every man his share of inheritance. No testament to the prejudice of other heirs is lawful.'

Re : **Lawful and heirs.**

'The child belongeth to the parent and violaters of wedlock shall be stoned and whosoever falsely claimed another for¹ his father or his master, the curse of Allah and of angels and of all mankind shall be upon him.'

Re : **Your wife and householder.**

'Ye people ! Ye have right over your wives and your wives have right over you ; it is their duty not to break their wifely faith nor comit

any act of manifest indecency. If they do so you have authority to confine them in separate rooms and to punish them but not severely. But if they refrain, clothe and feed them properly. Treat your women with loving kindness for they are with you as prisoners and captives. They have no power over anything that would sustain them. Verily ye have taken them on security of Allah and made their persons lawful unto you by the words of Allah.'

Re : Trust.

Be faithful to the trust imposed on you and shun transgression.

Re : Usury.

Usury is forbidden. The debtor shall return the principal only. Beginning will be made with the loan of my uncle Abbas (from his creditors).

Re : Vengeance.

'Henceforth the vengeance for blood practised in the time of ignorance (pre-Islamic days) is forbidden and the feud of blood is abolished. Beginning with the blood of my cousin Rabia, son of Haris.'

Re : Slaves.

'See that ye feed your slaves with such food as ye eat yourself and clothe them with the stuff ye wear and if they commit a fault which ye are not ready to forgive then part with them for they are servants of your Lord (Allah) as you are and must not be harshly treated. The slaves who say their prayers (Believing in your faith) are your brothers.'

Re : Muslims in general.

'Oh people, listen to my words and understand them. Know that Muslims are brother unto one another. Ye are one fraternity. Nothing belonging to one of you is lawful to his brothers unless given out of free goodwill. Guard yourselves from committing injustice. Let him that is present tell it to him that is absent. Haply he that shall be told may remember better than he who had heard it.' At the close of this sermon our Prophet said, "Oh Lord ! I have delivered my message and accomplished my work." Then he said, "Oh Lord ! I beseech Thee. Be Thou witness to it."

On return from this Haj when he reached a place called Ghadeer e-Khum (Pool of Khum),

he once again ordered Muslims to gather together and he delivered a long sermon in which he referred to all his divinely activities during 23 years of his prophethood. At the end of this sermon he ordered Muslims to follow the footsteps of Hazrat Ali, Fatima and those who are introduced by these two. All the Muslims on that day were witness that the Prophet lifted Ali and exclaimed, "Oh Muslims, be witness and convey this message of mine to posterity that Ali is the master of those, whose master I am." Then he prayed and said, "Oh Allah ! love those who Love Ali, help those who help Ali, disgrace and defect those who desert Ali."

On return to Medina in the second month of Eleventh Hijri, the prophet became ill. In end of that very month which is Safar, he died at Medina and was buried there in his Mosque.

N. B, There are many import events which I have not mentined. When time allows I will mention all datewise in detail.

THE SECOND INNOCENT FATIMA ZAHRA

Fatima Zahra was the daughter of the Prophet. Her mother was Khadija. She was born at Mecca in the beginning of the Prophethood of her father, i.e. about 15 B. H.

When her mother Khadija died in Mecca, she was already a grown-up girl. She was married to Ali in the first year of the Hijra. Four issues of the marriage survived: two sons, Hasan and Husain, and two daughters, Zainab and Omme Kulsum.

She was never the cause of any annoyance to her father or to her husband, Ali. She never pressed any demand upon her husband and when alone, she performed all the household duties. Even when she got a maid Fizzah, she never threw the full burden of her household on her but divided the work between herself and Fizzah. Her life, was one of contentment, forbearance and chastity, and her manner of bringing up her children was a model not only for the womanhood of her time, but also for women of all nations of the world and for all time to come. Thus the Prophet always held her in esteem, and would often say: "Whoso pleases my Fatima pleases me, and whoso displeases my Fatima, certainly displeases me."

After the fall of Khaybar when Fidak came into the possession of the Prophet, he made a gift of it to his daughter. Until the demise of the Prophet, this garden was in the possession of Hazrat Zahra. When the Prophet died, the First Caliph took it from Fatima on untenable grounds and made it a part of the State. In this connection Hazrat Zahra went to the Mosque with a number of Hashimite ladies. In the presence of the Muhajirs and the Ansars, she proved her claim to the property and made it clear that the act of taking over Fidak from her was not based on justice. But all the same, it was not restored to her. This was the cause of her great displeasure with all the companions of the Prophet—the Muhajirs and the Ansars—excepting only a few of her close relatives. She died at Medina after a protracted illness within 75 or 95 days of the demise of the Prophet. As a result of the offence the people gave her, she, at her deathbed, requested Ali to perform her burial at night and to conceal from people the location of her grave. Ali did so, this incident speaks of the height of her displeasure with the companions of the Prophet.

THE THIRD INNOCENT

THE FIRST IMAM

As already known, Hazrat Ali was born in 26 B. H. in the Holy K'aba. His father was Abu Talib, uncle of the Prophet, and his mother Fatima, daughter of Asad. When Ali was thirteen years old, Hazrat Muhammad proclaimed his prophethood. Ali was the first to believe in the Prophet. During the thirteen years of the Prophethood in Mecca, Ali was a constant companion of the Prophet. He also slept in the Prophet's bed on the terrible Night of Migration.

On the Prophet's migration, Ali returned all the trust which had been deposited with the Prophet by its respective owners. He paid all the debts of the Prophet, and then conveyed the Prophet's family and his own to Medina.

Throughout the Prophet's life he was at all times and under all conditions with him. In all battles of the Prophet, excepting Tabuk, he remained with him.

Ali's services to Islam were so conspicuous that the Prophet repeatedly said: "Had it not been for the wealth of Khadija and the chivalry of Ali, Islam would not have attained to the position it has?"

Ali was by the side of the Prophet upto the time of his death.

In fact, throughout the history of Islam, from the beginning of the Prophethood upto the demise of the Muhajirs and the Prophet, the preachings of the Prophet and the services of Ali went side by side.

We believe that after the Prophet, Ali had the right of succession to the caliphate. The Prophet had himself made it clear on several occasions, and particularly at Ghadir-i-Khum where he had proclaimed him as his Caliph. But on the demise of the Prophet when Ali saw that others had appeared on the scene, he silently kept himself aloof. He did not think it wise to use his sword for his rights, because that would have created dissension amongst the Muslims, and would have shaken the very foundation of Islam. When he saw rival claimants assuming the position of the Caliphate, he did not offer any resistance whatsoever. After the First Three Caliphs, the sense of justice of the Muslims was stirred and they returned to Ali and swore allegiance to him. With the exception of a few, all obeyed him. No sooner did Ali become Caliph than Moawiya, the Governor

of Syria, revived his old grudge and rebelled against him.

As a result of Moawiya's conspiracy, Ayesha, the widow of the Prophet together with a number of antagonists of Ali led the rebellious movement of Jamal at Basra in Iraq. Later on Moawiya himself intervened with a huge army for the purpose of a direct conflict at Siffin. Near the climax of this encounter Moawiya contrived to set another party against Ali at Nehrawan. A few months after the end of this warfare, Ali was injured by a Kharijite while offering his morning prayer on the 19th Ramzan, 40 A. H. in the mosque of Kufa. He succumbed to his injuries on the 21st Ramzan, and was buried at Najaf near Kufa.

Ali's Personality.

After the Prophet, there is no person who can be compared with Ali. Ali was an unparalleled servant of God. In learning, piety, worship, humility, sincerity and chivalry he had no rival. About his learning the Prophet said : "I am the City of Learning, and Ali is its Gate." Ali's friends and foes alike agree that for his life-time he had fixed quota of two breads a day and two shirts a

year. About his piety we have an idea from one of his following orations which has been handed down to us by his famous companion Kumail, who quotes: "Have I simply to be contented with people calling me Commander of the Faithfuls and lag behind in sharing their sorrows and hardships!"

About his bravery and courage, it is to be pointed out that in the third year of Hijra, Abu Sufyan, father of Moawiya, assembled the infidels of Mecca and its neighbourhood against the Muslims in Ohod in which battle all the companions of the Prophet withdrew from the field. Only the Prophet and his devoted friend and follower Ali remained. Ali shielded the Prophet from the onslaught, receiving 90 wounds in all but he was not the man to fly away from the battle-field. It was remarked: "La Fata Illa Ali, i.e. there is no conqueror like Ali. It was Ali about whom the Prophet said: "Ali is with Righteousness and Righteousness is with Ali."

It is pity that his greatness was not appreciated and the treatment he received was incompatible with his dignity and heritage.

THE FOURTH INNOCENT THE SECOND IMAM

Hazrat Hasan, who was the son of Ali and Fatima-i-Zahra, was born at Medina on the 15th Ramazan, in 2 A. H. After the martyrdom of his father, the people of Kufa swore allegiance to him on the 21st Ramazan in the mosque, at Kufa. You will remember that due to the conspiracies of Moawiya, this Imam was obliged to abandon the right to Caliphate in order to show to the succeeding generation that the Ommayyades had no love for Islam or the Muslims and that they were the people who staked everything for wordly gains. No sooner had the Imam concluded peace* with Moawiya and left Medina than the latter appointed Merwan, an old enemy of Imam Hasan and Ali's family as Governor of Medina. Merwan preached hatred for long

* Some of the terms of the treaty signed between Imam Hanan and Moawiya are as follows :—

That Moawiya would follow the commandments of the Quran and the principles of Islam ; that he would not molest the Shias of Ali and would protect their life, property and honour ; that he would not curse Hazrat Ali our First Imam and that he would not nominate his Successor.—Conclusion see page No. 55.

ten years. At every place and assembly he slandered Ali and the Prophet's family. In the end Imam Hasan was poisoned to death. His death took place on the 28th Safar 50 A. H. at Madina and was buried there.

After the funeral bath the bier of Imam Hasan was taken towards the Prophet's tomb for funeral prayers to be offered in front of the Prophet's grave. At that moment the same Merwan appeared with Ayesha and prevented the bier from being taken to the mosque.

However, he was buried in the graveyard of Baqi in Medina.

Moawiya rejoiced at the demise of Imam Hasan, perhaps at the thought that he himself would live forever to govern as King. He forgot that he would have to die also and that the judgment of God would finally prevail over the affairs between him and Imam Hasan.

Before I close the life-sketch of Imam Hasan, I should like to track the enemies of the family of the Prophet, and of a number of other conspiracies.

Non-Shia historians, while referring to the terms of Peace between Imam Hasan and Moawiya, introduce a condition that Imam Hasan

got a stipend fixed for his subsistence. In other words, they build up a case that Imam Hasan abdicated in favour of Moawiya against a compensation of a certain sum from the Bait-ul-Mal. But these historians had not even enough common sense to find out and record whether Imam Hasan also swore allegiance to Moawiya? In this way they try to establish that the Caliphate was like a personal estate which could be transferred by lease, mortgage or sale to anybody at will.

Now I should like to place before my enlightened readers the following points : (1) If the Caliphate was bestowed upon Imam Hasan by God, he should have, in the event of his being unfit, appointed another Caliph or Imam. (2) If the Caliphate came to Imam Hasan by the verdict of the people, they should have removed him and given their verdict in favour of Moawiya or somebody else. In this way, how could a single individual like Imam Hasan pass over the position of Caliphate to Moawiya. Moreover, the Bait-ul-Mal was not the personal property of Moawiya's forefathers. It belonged to every Muslim who had a specific share in it. How then could this transaction materialise ?

Now let me tell you what were the motive behind the introduction of this story of pension to Imam Hasan.

Another conspiracy, the historians, bribed by Moawiya, say that Imam Hasan took many wives and divorced them. They attribute as many as 300 wives to him. It is reported that there were 40 or more golden cradles swinging in his house. By this, God forbid, they meant to insinuate that Imam Hasan was inclined to licentiousness. In order to understand this conspiracy we have to consider the following points :

(a) The grounds for divorce are sickness and differences, i. e., until there is a complaint from one or the other party a divorce cannot be easily given. Divorce is not like marriage that it can be performed at pleasure. Of course, if after the marriage the woman is sick or the husband is ill-tempered or he has a sickness which can be the cause of hatred, divorce is possible according to the Islamic Law.

In the case of differences and disputes, first they have to be settled through arbitration as is laid down in the Quran :

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِ

وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِن يَرِيدَ إِصْلَاحًا يُّوفِّقِ اللَّهُ
بَيْنَهُمَا ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ۝

[Women (النِّسَاء)] : IV—35]

“And if ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo ! Allah is ever knower, Aware.”

In cases other than this, divorce is the worst possible thing in Islam, both socially and morally. Neither a Muslim man nor a woman is permitted to marry and divorce according to passing whims and fancies.

Thus it was not at all possible for Imam Hasan, the son of a noble family and the grand-son of the Prophet to act in contravention of the principles of Islam. Imam Hasan was brought up in a chaste environment by Fatima Zahra and received his education from Ali. He was a follower of the Quran, the very grand-son of the Prophet and a true and sincere servant of God, and thus it would have been alien to his birth, breeding and character to marry the sisters and

daughters of the Muslims only to divorce them in order to select others.

(b) Shia and non-Shia Muslims do not record more than 15 children (including both sons and daughters) and these issues are from four or five wives. The details of them are as follows :

Zaid, Ummul Hasan, Ummul Husain by Umme Bashir, Zaid, Manzoor, Omar, Qasim, Abdullah by a free slave woman, Abdur Rahman by a slave girl and Hasan Asram, Tolha, Fatima by Azamul Haq, Umme Abdullah, Fatima, Umme Salma by two different wives.

The motive of these historians in slandering the Imam was obviously one of mischief and merely to please their benefactor, Moawiya.

Such slander was not only confined to Imam Hasan. Even the Prophet of Islam has not been spared.

While closing this chapter I shall request the learned Muslim ulemas and divines to purge the history of Islam of such ugly references.

THE FIFTH INNOCENT THE THIRD IMAM

Hazrat Husain, the younger son of Ali and Fatima, was born on the 3rd Sha'ban at Medina. On the day of his birth the Prophet went to the house of Zahra. He took his new-born grandson in his arms and according to the practice of Islam, said the Azan in his right ear and the Aqamat in his left one.

He named him Husain and made the prophesy of a tragic incident in his life at Karbala. One could never think that the Muslims would on the one hand accept Mohammad as their Prophet, and on the other hand massacre his grandson in a brutal manner.

When Moawiya died in 60 A.H. his thirty-two years old, immoral son, Yazid assumed the leadership of Islam. He at once wrote to the Governor of Medina who had been appointed by his father, to exact allegiance, among others, from the grandson of the Prophet, and that if Husain refused, his head should be sent to him. It was on the 26th of Rajab that the people of Medina came to know that the Governor Walid had called Imam Husain. Hazrat Husain went to meet Walid.

The question of allegiance arose and the Imam said that he would decide it the next day.

Imam Hosain left Medina publicly on the 27th Rajab together with the male and female members of his family, and reached Mecca on the 3rd Shaban, 60 A. H. He passed the whole of Ramazan in Mecca. While in Mecca, the people of Kufa constantly requested him to come there. He first sent his paternal cousin, Muslim son of Aqeel as his representative to Kufa. When Muslim reached Kufa he saw great enthusiasm among the people and reported to Imam Husain that the people were ready to help him and were eagerly awaiting for his arrival.

When Yazid sent Obaidullah bin Ziyad as Governor of Kufa, the situation totally changed, and as a result, Muslim and a number of his devoted companions and his hospitable host were killed, and the rest of the people were either imprisoned or interned in their houses. At Mecca, Imam Husain reviewed the past history of Islam, and drew up his plans. He decided that it would not be advisable for him to remain quiet at Mecca and allow himself to be assassinated by the spies of Yazid, a number of whom were already (in disguise) in Mecca. Further delay

and toleration was not justifiable. His mother kept quiet when her right was challenged and so did his father when his claim to caliphate was frustrated, and his brother had to conclude peace with Moawiya to expose internal conspiracies. He made up his mind to leave Mecca and engage in a crusade against Yazid, in a struggle between right and wrong, and between Islam and idolatry. Accordingly he left Mecca on the 8th Zilhijja, the day when intending pilgrims from all over parts of the world had assembled there. Eventually he reached Karbala on the 2nd Muharram in 61 A. H. On the 3rd Muharram, when Obaidullah bin Ziyad came to know of it, he sent his forces. Upto the 8th Muharram the army from the opposite camp kept pouring in, and there were also a few meetings between Imam Hossain and Omar S'ad, the Commander-in-Chief of Yazid's army, to settle the issue by peaceful means. Imam Husain offered to return back or go to the border or to cross into some non-Muslim country, rather than acknowledge the Caliphate of Yazid.

Ultimately, Husain was pressed to settle the issue at a bloody warfare on the 10th of Muharram.

Night of the 10th Muharram (Shab-e-Aashur).

After the night prayer, the Imam delivered a short sermon in the presence of his companions, and informed them that on the following morning a battle would take place and everybody with him would be killed. Therefore, those who wished to go were free to do so. Accordingly many left. On the 10th Ashura all the Hashimites and non-Hashimites who stayed consisted of 72 to 120 persons, all of whom were martyred.

The Morning of Ashura.

Both the sides engaged in the battle. In the first attack 40 companions of the Imam were killed. After this, one followed the other, and so long as the companions of the Imam were alive, no Hashimite was killed because the companions would not let the Hashimites go to the battle field before them.

Noon of Ashura.

The Imam offered his Zuhr prayer with a couple of his remaining companions and all the Hashimites. One of the companions of the Imam stood in front of him and prevented the enemies' arrows from reaching the Imam. On the conclusion of the prayer, this companion had received

so many injuries that he succumbed to them. Then the members of the Hashimite family started going to the battle-field. The first Hashimite to go to the field was Ali Akbar, son of the Imam, aged 25. Then Qasim, son of Imam Hasan who was hardly 15. Then followed the rest of the Hashimites ; the other brothers, nephews (sons of his sisters or brothers) and cousins, and all were martyred. The last to go was Abbas, aged 30 to 35 the oldest in the group. In the end the Imam took his son Ali Asghar to the battle field, but his pitiless enemies killed this suckling baby also. The Imam was left alone, and he made three desperate charges on the enemies. His valour and dash shamed the warriors of the enemies' camp. The Imam was martyred at about sunset, after which his encampment was looted and set on fire.

On the 11th Muharram the members of the Imam's family were sent to Kufa in captivity. Then under the orders of Obaidullah-bin-Ziyad, the members of the Imam's family consisting of only one male member, namely Imam Zainul Abedin, the rest being women, minor girls and infants, were sent to Syria. When they reached Syria, the situation took a turn against Yazid in

such a way that he did not think it advisable to let them stay in Syria. The restrictions on them were reduced and they made preparations to leave for Medina. On their way to Medina they visited Karbala and stayed there for a few days.*

Before closing this chapter, I should like to draw attention to one important point, namely, that Imam Husain had based his steps on basic principles. He drew up a plan before 61 A. H., and gave to it a practical shape in the Tragedy of Karbala. Accordingly, Imam Husain presented this plan in the form of a doah (prayer) on the day of Arafat during the Haj and prayed to God to fulfil his desire.

From this it is evident that the Imam had placed his life at the disposal of God. He sacrificed his life for truth and attained immortality.

* The incidents connected with the Tragedy of Karbala have not been dealt with in detail as there is not enough room for them here. The Tragedy of Karbala on Muharram 61 A. H. has been narrated in detail by many Muslim and non-Muslim historians. They have revealed the conspiracy behind this most tragic event in history. The depravity of the Omayyades and of their supporters stands exposed.

THE SIXTH INNOCENT

THE FORTH IMAM

Imam Zainul Abedin was the second son of Imam Husain. He was present at Karbala but owing to illness he could not go to the battle field and thus he was saved from the massacre. His mother was Shahr-i-Banu, daughter of Yezdgird III, the Emperor of Persia. She was taken captive at the fall of Mada'in under Omar, the Second Caliph. On reaching Medina, the Princess was set free and was married to Imam Husain. The ceremony was conducted by Salman-i-Farsi, who was Persian by origin, and a respected companion of the Prophet. Imam Zainul Abedin was born of this Princess at Medina on the 5th Sha'aban in 38 A. H.

Had he also been martyred at Karbala, the facts regarding the Tragedy of Karbala, the Sermon in Ghadir-i-Khum, confiscation of Fidak, cause of Zahra's death, Ali's martyrdom and the peace concluded by Hasan, would have all remained shrouded in mystery to the world for ever. He went to Kufa and Syria with the family of martyred Husain, and at every place

he preached the truth of Islam and the oppression meted out to the holy family of the Prophet. On his return to Medina, till his death, he narrated the facts about the barbarous and murderous acts of Yazid and his army. He said that the Tragedy of Karbala had two phases—the first was the martyrdom, which was enacted on the day of Ashura, and the second was the brutality, which took place with the consent of Yazid.

After the Tragedy of Karbala, the Imam lived until 95 A. H., and passed his days in seclusion at Medina. As an eye witness he gave a realistic picture of the Tragedy of Karbala and the brutal conduct of the followers of Yazid. Finally he was poisoned to death on the 25th Muharram in 95 A. H., under the orders of the Omayyade King, Hisham. The Imam was buried at Medina.

Among the sons of Imam Zainul Abedin, two are worthy of special mention. The life history of one, Imam Muhammad Baqar will be given under the title of the Fifth Imam. The other one was Zaid, the reputed son of Imam Zainul Abedin. Being disgusted with the misdeeds of the Omayyade Governor, he went to Syria where he was treated with injustice by the

then Omayyade ruler. Then he left for Kufa, where he collected an army from amongst the oppressed people of Kufa. He was preparing to march against the Omayyade King when the King despatched his army to Kufa. The Kufis, as was their nature, deserted Zaid when the time for action came. But Zaid, true to his Hashimite dignity and tradition, faced the Omayyade army single handed and was martyred in 122 A. H. A number of his devoted friends buried him at night. The next day, under the orders of the Omayyade Commander, his body was exhumed, head cut off and hanged and kept like that for four years. After four years his body was pulled down and burnt, and the ashes were scattered in the air. The history of Islam cannot forget this barbarous act.

A group of Shias regard Hazrat Zaid as the Imam and they are known as 'Zaidiya.' The present ruler of Yamen, and the majority of Yamenites are followers of Zaid.

Zaid's was a sacred personality through whom we have received Sahifa-i Kamila, i. e. the prayers of Imam Zainul Abedin, which is such a unique treasure in the Arabic language that nothing could equal it.

Here I shall give a few specimens of prayer and munajat, taken from Sahifa-e-Kamila and translated for the purpose.

Praise to Allah.

All praise is due to Allah, the First before Whom there was no First and the Last after Whom there shall be no Last. He, Who feeds us with wholesome sustenance. He made us independent by His grace and gave us wealth by His kindness. He commanded us to try our obedience and prohibited certain things so that He may test our gratitude.

Blessings to the Apostle.

O Lord! Bless Muhammad, the Trustee of Thy Message, the best of Thy creatures, the chosen one of Thy Servants, the harbinger of mercy, the precursor of goodness and the embodiment of blessing. He exerted himself to pain for Thy sake and fought Thy enemies till his mission was accomplished and what was planned for his friends was achieved. Thy command was established and Thy word was exalted.

For Parents.

O Lord! reward them for bringing me up and loving me, and guard them as they guarded me in my infancy.

To Muslims.

O Lord ! thereby strengthen the power of the Muslims and fortify their cities and multiply their wealth and relieve them from fighting for they worship Thee, so that none be adored in the earth except Thee and no forehead be placed on the dust for any one but for Thee.

Thanks-giving.

O Lord ! verily no one can ever come to the end of thanking Thee for the good that accrues to him from Thy benevolence requires still more thanks.

Therefore, the most thankful of Thy creature is he who is conscious of his inability to thank Thee and the most devout is he who knows that he can not adore Thee sufficiently.

Hope.

Praise be to God, Who existed before creation and life. Who shall continue to exist after all things have perished. The Knower, Who forgets not him who remembers Him, and Who does not disappoint him who prays Him, and Who does not frustrate the hope of him who places hope in Him.

THE SEVENTH INNOCENT THE FIFTH IMAM

Imam Muhammad Baqar's father was Imam Zainul Abedin, and mother was Umme Abdullah, the daughter of Imam Hasan. He was born on the 1st. Rajab, 57 A. H., at Medina, and died from the effects of poison on the 7th Zilhijja, 114 A. H. He was buried by the side of his father and uncle at Medina.

During the last days of his father's Imamate, there was an agitation against the Omayyades throughout the country. This gave him ample opportunities to preach the true teachings of Islam which he had received from his ancestors. His orations on Shiism from the view point of philosophy, history, sociology, etc., are extant.

Jabir, son of Abdullah Ansari, one of the famous companions of our Prophet, who was the first to visit the tomb of Imam Husain at Karbala on the day of Arbayeen, i. e. the 20th Safar, 61 A. H., was alive upto his time and saluted him and said, "Your reverend grandfather, the Prophet of Islam, had told me that I would live upto the time of the Fifth Imam, his grandson, Muhammad Baqar, (i. e. you) and I would meet you and that when I do so I convey to you

his (the Prophet's) salaam as you would have same name as Prophet's i. e. 'Muhammad'. He also said that you would be able to solve every difficult and complicated problem, and that is why you would be called "Baqaar" which means "solver."

Imam Muhammad Baqaar carried on cultivation in the vicinity of Medina. Muhammad ibn Munkadir, a renowned Sufi of the time, says : Once I saw the Imam coming from his garden on a summer's day. He was exhausted and perspiring. I went to the Imam and said : "At this age you are engaged in worldly affairs. If death overtakes you, what will you have to tell God ?"

The Imam said : "Well, if I die, I shall die in the act of obeying God because I earn a living for myself and my dependents by the dint of labour and do not throw the burden of my maintenance on the shoulders of other persons as you do." In other words he meant that worshipping does not consist of relinquishing the world and passing one's days and nights in mosques and then begging for one's maintenance. Because true worship consists of offering the compulsory prayers, observing the fast, and then

earning one's livelihood and supporting others, and also paying the due Zakat and Khums on such income. How can there be an income without fret and foil and without an income how one would pay the compulsory Zakat and Khums? God wishes the Muslims to be prosperous and self reliant and not to be beggars like the Muslims of to-day.

To be brief, from this narrative, one can see that our Imams worked hard for their livelihood, and taught their followers, the Shias, to do the same. According to Shia belief, begging is a forbidden thing like wine, gambling, stealing, etc. According to the Imam : **Woe be to the person who throws the burden of his life upon others. But if he is disabled, and cannot earn, it is the duty of every Shia to help him and regard him as his brother and give him every financial relief.**

THE EIGHTH INNOCENT THE SIXTH IMAM

Imam Ja'far Sadiq : His father was Imam Muhammad Baqar, and mother Umme Farwah, daughter of Qasim, son of Muhammad, son of Abu Baker, the First Caliph. He was born on the 17th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 83 A. H., at Medina. The Shias are known as Imami, Asna-i-Ashri or Jafari. I have already said when writing about Imam Muhammad Baqar that there developed an agitation against the Ommayyades throughout the length and breadth of the Muslim countries. A huge army assembled under an Iranian General Abu Muslim Khorasani and advanced towards Syria, and reached Mosul on the border of Iraq where a pitched battle took place. Merwan II, the last Ommyyade king was killed and this brought the Ommayyade dynasty to a close. At last, on the 5th of Ramzan 133 A. H., Abbas as-Saffah, the First Abbaside King, entered Kufa. The people of Kufa and the army swore allegiance to him. Abbas as-Saffah died in the month of Zilhijja in 136 A. H. Mansur, his younger brother, became the Second Abbaside

King. In short the downfall of the Omayyades could be placed between 114 and 132 A.H. During this period the Ommayades were constantly deteriorating and the new regime was in making. The Abbasides laid the foundation of their dynasty on the goodwill and help of the members of the Prophet's Family. Thus the hardships of the Prophet's Family remained noticeable. Imam Ja'far Sadiq took advantage of this opportunity, and taught the true teaching of Islam at Medina from the Prophet's mosque, and during his tour of Iraq, from the mosque at Kufa. Besides this he taught the traditions of the Prophet, commentaries on the Quran, Fiqah, philosophy, history, sociology, and what not. In this way we received from him those traditions of the Prophet which had reached this Imam's father from his grandfather, Hazrat Ali.

As I have mentioned in my Second Step, we Shias believe and practise those traditions of the Prophet which have reached us through the Holy Family of the Prophet. About 2/3 of the Shias Literature is indebted to this Imam. The famous religious doctor of the Muslims, Imam Abu Hanifa, was the disciple of this Imam.

But when Mansur, the Second Abbaside Caliph, exterminated the Omayyades and murdered his faithful and sincere officer, General Abu Muslim Khorasani, he feared that the relatives of Ali and Fatima might resent at it and changed his attitude towards them and placed restriction upon them. Whenever the children of Hasan and Husain complained to Mansur against the oppressions of his Governor, he imprisoned them or had them murdered. In short, they were oppressed in many ways. Mansur's greatest fear was that the followers and sympathisers of the family of the Prophet in Iran, Iraq, and Hedjaz might revolt and support Imam Ja'far Sadiq. Thus he started harassing Imam Ja'far Sadiq. Once or twice he called the Imam to Iraq but when he found that the Imam was above all wordly office, he sent him back to Medina, apparently with honour. This visit of the Imam to Iraq followed the discovery of the grave of Hazrat Ali which attracted Shia visitors. It was under the guidance of this Imam that the graves of the martyrs of Karbala were marked, and through him many sacred spots in the mosque of Kufa were discovered. However, the Imam returned to Medina, and was poisoned.

under the orders of Mansur. He died on 25th Shawwal, 148 A. H., and was buried near his father. It was after this Imam that the Shias were divided into two sections, one Imamia and the other Ismaili. Here I like to say a few words about the Ismailis.

Among the, sons of Imam Ja'far Sadiq the most famous are Ismail and Musa Kazim. After the Imam, one section of the Muslims accepted Musa Kazim as their Imam, and they are called Imamia ; another group accepted Ismail as their Imam and they are called Ismaili. The Ismailis are now divided into two groups, one is Aghakhani, spread over Iran, Syria, North Africa, India, Pakistan and on the border of Afghanistan ; the other is Bohra. It seems desirable to say some thing about the birth of these two sects.

Ismaili. The eldest son of Imam Ja'far Sadiq was Ismail whose mother was Fatima, daughter of Asram son of Imam Hasan. He died at Areez, near Medina, in 133 A. H. and was buried in Medina. Imam Ja'far Sadiq loved this son very much and so the Shias of the time thought that he would be the successor of his

father. Therefore, on the demise of Imam Ja'far Sadiq, the Shias were split up into three sections :

(1) Those who regard Musa Kazim as their seventh Imam, (2) Those who believe that Imam Ja'far Sadiq had nominated Ismail to be his successor (though Ismail had died during the life time of his father, the belief prevailed that he was to be the Imam and that the Imamate would continue in his line), and (3) Those who believe that in fact Ismail did not die, but disappeared, and he will appear again and fill the earth with justice. These last two sects are called Ismailis. The Ismaili propagation went on in an organised way and the religion was propagated secretly. The first Ismailis, under the name of Fatimides, established caliphate in North Africa in 297 A. H. For 270 Years, i. e., upto 567 A. H., fourteen kings or Fatimide Caliphs ruled one after another. Of their greatest achievement is al-Azhar University, the foundation of which was laid by Abul Hasan Jauhar, Commander-in-Chief of Moiz, and this is the first University of the world which owes its existence to the Shias.

Aghakhani and Bohra Ismailis. When Mustansir, the 8th Fatimide ruler died in 487 A. H.,

his son Nazar became Caliph, but his father's Prime Minister, Afzal, due to an old grudge, dethroned him, and declared his brother Mustali as Caliph. Nazar either left Egypt secretly and being arrested at Alexandria, was beheaded by the orders of Mustali or he left North Africa and went towards Iran. In this way, after Mustali, the Ismailis were divided into two sections :—

(1) Those who believe Nazar to be the Caliph and his son Hadi who went to Iran to be his successor. The descent of the Aghakhan is traced to this Hadi and from him to Imam Ja'far Sadiq. The Naza'r Ismailis now called Aghakhanis, were previously remembered as Sabbahi from Hasan bin-Sabbah. (2) Those who believe Mustali to be the Caliph and believe that the line of Caliphate was in his family. They are to be found in Egypt, Yemen and India, and as they are a business community, they are known as Bohras which means businessmen. The Bohras are the followers of Mustali. They also have two sections, Daudi, and Sulaimani. The Daudi Bohras believe Imam Saifuddin to be the successor of their Imam. On the contrary the Aghakhanis regard the Agha Khan as the Imam of the time.

The Bohras follow the shariat and all the principles of Islam in respect of Prayer, Fasting, Khums, Zakat, Haj etc., as directed by Mulla Saifuddin, who himself fulfils these obligations strictly and advises his followers to do likewise.

The Aghakhanis believe that their religion consists in obedience to their Imam i. e. they do whatever their Imam orders or forbids. For example, if the Aghakhan says that prayers must be said, they do so ; if he asks them not to do fast, they do not fast ; if he asks them not to go to Haj, they do not go, and so on and so forth. In short, the Aghakhani Ismailis almost follow the preachings of Hasan bin-Sabbah, 'The Old Man of the Mountain'.

THE NINTH INNOCENT THE SEVENTH IMAM

Imam Musa Kazim : His father was Ja'far Sadiq, and mother Hamida. He was born on the 17th Safar in 128 A. H. at Abwa, a station between Mecca and Medina. When his father died, it was the reign of Mansur, the Second Abbaside Caliph. His orders were that whosoever was nominated by Imam Ja'far Sadiq as his successor should be murdered. But before his death, in the presence of a vast assembly Imam Ja'far Sadiq appointed three persons to look after his affairs on his death. The first was the Abbaside Caliph Mansur himself, the second was the Governor of Medina, and third was his son, Musa Kazim. Besides this, sometimes before his death, the Imam declared before an assembly in the following words : "I appoint my son, Musa Kazim to give me the funeral bath and perform the burial." To be brief after Imam Ja'far Sadiq, a great number of Shias regard Musa Kazim as their Imam. After the Abbaside king, Mansur, the children of Fatima remained to some extent in peace during the two succeeding Caliphs, Hadi and Mehdi but when the fifth Abbaside Caliph, Haroonur Rashid came to the throne, harassment to the

children of Ali and Fatima was renewed. As protection of life has priority over all considerations, the Imam, in order to save himself and his Shias from persecution by the ruler of the time, abstained from attending to religious questions, and reserved his own opinion and backed the decisions of the ulemas of the time on religious matters. Consequently Haroon feared an agitation against himself by the friends and sympathisers of the Prophet's Family in Iran in favour of the Imam. Therefore, ostensibly with the intention of performing Haj, Haroon went to Mecca. From there he proceeded to Medina, and took the Imam in custody, and secretly despatched him to Basra. He ordered his Governor at Basra to treat the Imam with harshness. In spite of repeated orders from Haroon, the Governor wrote back that he could not find any excuse for which he could be harsh upon the Imam and pointed out that he was God-fearing, given to prayer, and a true servant of God. He passed his days and nights in prayer and the Governor had often listened to his prayer (munajat). Some of his prayers are as follows :

"O God ! Thou art witness that I prayed to Thee to give me secluded place where I might pass my days in worshipping Thee in peace."

"O God! this desire of mine has been fulfilled in this prison. Now I have got Thee after leaving everybody."

"O God! how should I express my gratefulness for this gift of Thine". In short, the Governor refused to ill treat the Imam, and Haroon was compelled to call him from Basra to Bagdad. He kept the Imam under the guard of a Kharijite, an enemy of the children of Ali, who was the Jailor, and whose name was Sendi, son of Shahik.

In the first place this Kharijite was an enemy, and when he received the orders of Haroon to ill-treat the Imam, he treated him with great incivility and oppression. The Imam fasted during the day, for his Sahri and Iftari he had only a small quantity of hot water and barley bread. His abode was a cell in the prison, and that too an under-ground one. As Baghddad is situated on the bank of the Tigris it is damp, particularly so was the underground cell in which the Imam was imprisoned which caused his ill health. Gradually the Imam became very weak. When Haroon heard about this instead of expressing regret, he had the Imam poisoned. After giving the order to poison him, he himself left Baghddad for a few days. In the meantime

the Jailor Sendi carried out this order by giving poisoned dates. The Imam died of the effect of the poison on the 25th Rajab, in 183 A. H. Under the orders of Haroon the same Jailor first had the body removed to the gate, and four slaves lifted the body without respect or ceremony. But how long could the Muslims of Baghdad have over-looked this brutal conduct? A party of them under the leadership of Sulaiman, took over the body from the custody of the Jailor, and arranged the funeral with due respect and buried the Imam near Baghdad, in the Quraish cemetery.

The result of Haroon's oppressive attitude was that he no doubt ruled Baghdad and raised walls surrounding his palaces but he lived to die outside Baghdad at Khorasan in Iran where he is buried. But Imam Musa Kazim died peacefully and with the blessings of God in prison at Baghdad.

Every morning the people of Baghdad witness the sun bowing to the grave of the Imam, and saying it adieu in the evening.

THE TENTH INNOCENT THE EIGHTH IMAM

Imam Ali Raza : His father was Musa Kazim, and mother Ummul Baneen. He was born at Medina on the 15th Zilqad, 151 A. H. The Shias revere him as their Eighth Imam. After the demise of this Imam's father, Haroon, fearing that as a result of sympathy with the descendants of the Prophet there might be an agitation, relaxed oppressions on this Imam and other children of Ali. However, Haroon died at Tus (Iran). His son Mamun was with him. His other son Amin became the Caliph at Baghdad. According to the will of Haroon, Mamun was declared Amin's heir. But Amin wanted to declare his own son instead of Mamun. This resulted in differences between the two brothers. Amin despatched his forces to arrest Mamun and bring him to his presence at Baghdad, while Mamun, being an Iranian through his mother, collected an Iranian army and marched towards Baghdad. The two armies met at Ray. Amin's army was defeated and the Iranian army captured Baghdad. Amin was killed in the battle. With the help of this army Mamun became uncontested Caliph.

At this victory Mamun decided to gratify the Iranians. He sent a deputation to Imam Raza and invited him to come to Tus. By this he first wanted to make amends for the oppressions of his father on the family of the Prophet, and secondly he wanted to please the Iranians, the majority of whom were sympathisers of the family of the Prophet. The Imam saw no alternative but to go to Khorasan. Before leaving Medina, he first of all declared his son Muhammad Taqi to be his successor and next Imam. Then he called for the members of his family and taking his seat amidst them in a chair said : "You have to bid me farewell ; look at me and weep." From this the people guessed that the Imam would not return and would live his life away from home.

However, Imam Raza left for Iran. He stayed one night at Naishapur. In the morning when the Imam was about to leave, the local residents assembled and requested him to narrate a tradition which could be linked to the Prophet. The Imam acceded to their request in this manner :—

"I repeat the narration of my father Musa Kazim, who narrated from his father Ja'far Sadiq, who narrated from his father Muhammad

Baqar, who from his father Zainul Abedin, who from his father Imam Hosain who from his brother Hasan and father Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, who from the Prophet of God, who said : 'Laa ilaha Illallah' is my fortification and whosoever enters into this fortified place will escape the fire of Hell." After this, when he went a little further, he again said :

"There are conditions for the entrance into this fortification (i. e. offering prayers, fasting, performing Haj, giving Khums and Zakat, helping the needy). I am also one of the conditions, (i. e. the Prophet had made it incumbent upon the Muslims to follow the members of his Family, and revere them)". And a prominent member of the Family of the Prophet was Imam Raza.

From Naishapur the Imam went to Tus. Mamun was very happy and celebrated the occasion by declaring Imam Raza as his heir. He ordered coins to be struck in the name of the Imam but his true colours did not remain concealed for long. He was truly the son of Haroon, a bitter enemy of the Prophet's Family. In short, the Imam was poisoned by the orders of the same Mamun. He died at Tus on the 29th Safar, 203 A. H. and was buried near Haroon's

grave. So long as the Abbasides ruled, they took great care of the tomb of Haroon but deliberately neglected that of the Imam. But for how long could this last? Their dynasty crumbled and their names and traces are extinct. But such was not the end of the children of the Prophet Mohammad, whose shrines are centres of pilgrimage for countless devotees. Until this day the tomb of Imam Raza is the focus of millions and shall so remain till eternity. Amen, Amen, Amen.

THE ELEVENTH INNOCENT

THE NINTH IMAM

Imam Muhammad Taqi: His father was Imam Raza and mother Sabiha. He was born on the 3rd Rajab, 195 A. H. at Medina. At the demise of his father he was of tender age, but the Shias accepted him as their Imam. We Shias believe in Divine Right. To us Prophethood and Imamate are gifts of God and can be bestowed upon whomsoever God wishes. For example Jesus Christ was made an Apostle from the day of his birth ; and was commanded to be witness regarding his mother, Mary. God made Yahya Prophet in his childhood. It concerns merit and not the age. In the same way Muhammad Taqi was bestowed with this gift of God. He was the true Imam and the Shias revere him as such. However, after the demise of Imam Raza, Mamun found it hard to stay in Iran any longer. He went to Baghdad and sent for Imam Muhammad Taqi, who was then at Medina. Then he assembled his courtiers and the learned divines and announced that he wanted to betroth Imam Muhammad Taqi to his daughter Ummul Fazl. Mamun always said : "May God bless

Abul Hasan (Ali Raza) for I am under obligation to him." After this declaration, Mamun's family had to give their consent and asked Mamun to test Imam Muhammad Taqi in respect of religious matters. Accordingly he called the reputed Yahya, son of Aksam, and he himself was present at the assembly. Yahya, with the permission of Mamun questioned the Imam in this way : "What is the position of the Haji, who shoots while under Ahram ?" The Imam said : "First please make the question clear, whether by Haji is meant a Haji under Ahram of Umra or in Ahram of Haj (i. e. before the 9th Zilhijja). Whether at Mecca or outside Mecca, whether he shot a bird or a beast, whether he knew the commandments of God or was illiterate, whether he repented over what he had done, or was unrepentant, whether he shot purposely or inadvertently." Yahya was perplexed and could not reply. He was shame-faced. Then the Imam himself replied to this question with detail. At this very Majlis, Mamun performed the nikah ceremony of his daughter with the Imam. The Imam himself recited the sermon, and said, "I accept Mamun's daughter as my wife, and fix a dower of 500 dirhams after the precedence of

my grandmother Fatima," which Mamun accepted. After the marriage the Imam went to Medina. When Mamun died his brother Motasim became the Caliph. Motasim, like his father Haroon, started to harass the children of Ali. Thus he called Imam Muhammad Taqi from Medina to Baghdad, and soon after, through his niece Ummul Fazl, got the Imam poisoned. The Imam died on the last day of Zilqad, in 223 A. H. at Bagdad at the age of 28. He was buried near his grandfather, Musa Kazim. The tombs of both the Imams are near Bagdad. At first it was called the graveyard of the Quraish and now it is called Kazimain or Jawadain.

THE TWELFTH INNOCENT THE TENTH IMAM

Imam Ali Naqi : He was the son of Imam Muhammad Taqi, and his mother was Samanah. He was born on the 2nd Rajab in 214 A. H. at Medina.

After his father he was acknowledged as the Imam by the Shias. He lived at the time of the Abbaside Caliph Mutawakkil. This ruler was notorious in Islamic history for his evil deeds, blood shed and cruelty. He is rightly called the Nero of Islam. He was particularly malicious towards Hazrat Ali. In his court he always kept a man to impersonate Hazrat Ali who was made to suffer indignities. In other words, this Abbaside Mutawakkil was like the Omayyade Moawiya in enmity with Hazrat Ali. When Mutawakkil came to know that the Shias went to Karbala frequently to visit the grave of Imam Husain, he ordered it to be destroyed. The Land of Karbala was ploughed and a tributary of the Euphrates was directed towards it in an effort to remove the grave of Husain. In short, by his actions Mutawakkil revived the enmity characteristic of Yazid. As a result no Shia ventured to go to

Karbala to visit the graves of the Martyrs. One example of his enmity with the descendants of the Prophet was that though Imam Ali Naqi lived a secluded life in Medina and spent his time in the worship of God, he did not leave the Imam undisturbed. He wrote to his Governor to sent the Imam to Samera which was the head-quarters of the Government at that time. Therefore, Imam Ali Naqi had to go to Samera. So long as Mutawakkil lived he troubled the Imam in various ways. Sometimes he sent him to the zoo and ordered the cages of the beasts to be opened in order to frighten him, and sometimes he called him to his drinking bouts and offered him wine which the Imam always refused with this remark : "God is witness that the descendants of Muhammad never mixed their flesh and blood with wine." He then asked the Imam to sing. The admonitions and counsel of the Imam at such occasions are worthy of notice. The gist of some of them is as follows :—

"Mutawakkil ! many proud and mighty kings before thee lived in sin, luxury and intoxication and today no trace of them is left. They believed that tyrants and tyranny would always live, and never thought that death would soon overtake

them. They never realised that they have to leave their kingdoms and wealth for the grave and dust."

This filled Mutawakkil with shame. He did not succeed in his attempt to get the Imam poisoned, but his son Motaz Abbasi proved to be the true son of his father by having the Imam poisoned. The Imam died on the 29th Jamadi-us-Sani in 254 A. H. at Samera and was buried there in his own house.

This Imam said : When justice and equity prevail and the majority endeavour to practise them it is our duty to regard everybody as good until we know that any one is a veritable evil doer. But when there is the rule of tyranny and the majority are inclined towards evil, then everybody is to be regarded as evil doer until we know for certain that one is good and then such a person should be befriended."

After this statement it must be admitted that in our own times although the majority in European countries are non-Muslims most people there are educated, dependable and endowed with the qualities of good behaviour, and so we have to regard all of them as good until we learn that they are deceitful and dishonest. Contrary

to this, in Muslim countries, although the majority are Muslims, they tell lies, embezzle trusts, deceive, and few are dependable. Islam forbids wine, gambling, adultery, theft, bribe and denounces these as social and personal vices but how many Muslims are free from these vices ?

In short, the first sign of Shiaism is truth, honesty and sympathy, Imam Ja'far Sadiq describes a true Shia as follows :—

“O my Shias ! in life conduct yourselves in such a way that when people see your good deeds they say : May God bless Ja'far ibn Muhammad who gives good tidings to his followers ! O my Shias ! you have to be my ornaments and not my disgrace.”

THE THIRTEENTH INNOCENT THE ELEVENTH IMAM

Imam Hasan Askari : His father was Imam Ali Naqi, and mother Sausan. He was born on the 8th Rabi-us-Sani in 232 A. H. at Medina. When Imam Ali Naqi died, the Shias turned to his son and acknowledged him as their Imam. He was known as Askari because the Abbaside Caliph Mutamid, due to family enmity, called the Imam from Medina and lodged him at Samera in the Askeria or cantonment area. From the traditions of the Prophet the Abbasides knew that amongst the Prophet's decendants there would appear a person by the name of Mahdi who would fill the earth with justic, so they always feared that this Imam might be the promised Mahdi. Therefore, in the endeavour to put out this divine light, Motamid called the Imam to Samera. Although he did not trouble the Imam as Mansur, Haroon and Motawakkil had done he kept a special eye on the Imam. At last he got the Imam poisoned. When the Imam got sick, Mutawakkil deputed ten of his confederates to look after his treatment. These men had to live at the house of the Imam and their real duty was to spy against him i. e. to note as to

who went to see the Imam and who left his household, how many sons he had and whom he would nominate as his successor. In short, this party of ten stayed in the house of the Imam till the 7th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 260 A. H. They failed as they could find nothing to report. They submitted their report to the Abbaside Caliph to the effect that they had not seen any of the Imam's sons at his house, nor did they find anything extra ordinary there. Mutamid was relieved and became happy that he had succeeded in his designs. The Imam died the following morning on the 8th Rabi-ul-Awwal. The Imam's brother, Ja'far, claimed that he was his successor. The bier of the Imam was taken out of the house for the funeral prayer. Ja'far wanted to stand in front and offer the prayer. The court dignitaries, divines and people of Samera were present and their surprise knew no bound when they saw a boy of tender age, of striking resemblance to the Imam stepped in and approached Ja'far. He caught Ja'far by the hem of his garment and said, "Uncle ! you must not lead the prayer. I have greater right than yourself to say the funeral prayer on the bier of my father." This boy was the son of Imam Hasan

Askari, and his name was 'Mohammad.' He led the funeral prayer. This action kept the assembly in great suspense. It especially caused great worry to Mutamid. He could not understand how the report of his ten-man committee could have been wrong.

However, Imam Hasan Askari was buried by the side of his father. After the funeral, the army of Mutamid besieged the house of Imam. The members of his family were directed to find out who the boy was, where he lived, and whether he had gone. But to no use. His malicious effort could not succeed. The boy was untraceable.

One of the sayings of the Imam is, "He is the worst Muslim who is double-faced, double-tongued, who praises his brethren in faith in their presence but backbites them the moment they are away. His friends are with him till his table is loaded with delicacies and till he has wealth, but when he falls into worldly difficulties they abandon him and join another rich man."

Rightly has it been said of such person :

In doghl-i-doostan ke mibeeni

Magasanand dur sheereeni.

The swarm of friends that you see are like flies about the sweet.

THE FOURTEENTH INNOCENT THE TWELFTH IMAM

The Imam of the Time : Hazrat Mahdi was the name sake of the prophetic. His name was Muhammad. He was the only son of Imam Hasan Askari and his mother was Nargis. He was born on the 15th Sha'ban, in 256 A. H. at Samera. He is the Successor of the Eleventh Imam, and the Imamia Shias believe that he is the Twelfth Imam. His father died when he was yet of tender age. He became Imam in his childhood. I have already mentioned while writing about Imam Muhammad Taqi, that Imamate is God's gift and is not governed by age. Just as Yahya became prophet in his childhood so Hazrat Mahdi became Imam in his childhood. According to the Shia belief he is still alive since his birth in 256 A. H. and is in hiding. When God orders he will reappear. When he reappears, Islam will be the only religion in the world, and the rule of the Quran will prevail. He will preach the true teachings of the Quran and invite people to Islam, and whosoever will not listen to him will have jihad waged against him until on earth there remains

nothing but the religion of Islam and the teachings of the Quran. Justice and equity will have their rule.

The Shias believe that many of them will have the good fortune of meeting the Imam. Now the question remains whether it is possible for a man to remain alive from 256 A. H. till today ?

In order to solve this problem, I have to go into a little detail and give the following facts which will throw light on this subject.

(a) If the objector is a Muslim, a reference from the Quran should suffice. The Quran refers to the prophet Noah in this way—"Noah lived 950 years among his people and preached among them." When it is possible for Noah to live for 950 years, why is it not possible for the Imam-i-Zaman to do so ? When longevity was a gift of God to Noah, why should it not be a gift to the Imam-i-Zaman ?

If the objector be a Jew, a Christian, a Parsee or a Hindu we will offer different references. In the cases of the first we must refer to his religious book the Torah in which there are many references ascribing longer lives to persons.

The Parsees believe that their Kings have lived from 300 to 500 and even upto 1000 years. As regards Hindus there are the instances of incarnation among them and hence this question could easily be answered from the respective religion of everyone.

(b) Does reason put a limit to the length of life which cannot be exceeded or is there no limit to it? Reason has never been able to establish that there is a limit fixed for longevity, and so also common belief cannot fix a limit to it. No doubt according to actual facts, the limit has been fixed at 150 years and there is no record beyond this. But it should not be forgotten that the absence of record is one thing and for something to be proved beyond reason is another. Now we have to define what life is and what are the conditions of perpetuating it. Until this day we have not been able to define life and we can only say that life is something connected with three facts. The first is Movement, the second is Growth and the third is Birth—the first, traces of which, appear in the form of a cell which moves in different directions. This cell secures its own food and grows to produce its own life, and gets divided into even parts. This.

continues till these cells get suitable food and if there are no obstructions to their growth. In case there is any obstruction it is possible for a cell to die shortly after existence otherwise it can exist for thousands of years. Thus the life of a cell cannot be judged by reason or commonsense. When the cell develops into human form, its mode of life changes from the form of division to the form of birth. When the human form is completed, life appears in the form of a wonderful mechanism. Man is alive when his heart works, blood circulates and brain remains active with their help. This mechanism, through the agency of muscles and tissues, produces life.

Now it has to be seen what preparations have been made in the human body to perpetuate life. Nature has endowed the human body with 150 glands scattered in different areas, and they have properties in them which affect mind, digestion, youth, sexual life etc. So long as these properties remain intact and do not suffer increase or decrease through unknown causes, the circulation of the blood remains uniform. There are no wrinkles, and the hair does not get grey. In short, signs of old age do not appear. This substance keeps the blood pressure regular. For

example, near the kidneys there are a few such glands which produce sexual power and maturity in man. Such glands are also found in the brain, eyes, throat, digestive organs, kidneys, spleen, near the thighs etc. Therefore, to maintain life, it is necessary to keep these glands intact by material means, and see that they continue their function and supply the necessary properties of life.

In short, in order to continue material life, it is necessary to keep the material means intact and so long as the one is active, the other also remains active. Thus for an ordinary individual it is possible to live from a moment to a thousand years. What limit can be placed upon the life of one whom God wishes to keep alive for the propagation of His Religion, for the expression of His Might, and the spreading of Justice ?

Shias believe that Mohammad, son of Imam Hasan Askari, is still alive and has not revealed his identity, i. e., he lives his life in such a way that no body recognises him, because he does not introduce himself to people as an Imam having that position been bestowed upon him by God. Therefore no body knows him by his real designation. There is no doubt that at the time of Haj

he is at all the holy places at the auspicious hours with the Hajis. He knows and recognises everybody, but no body recognises him as an Imam.

(b) Now that I have discussed the possibilities of the length-life in the passages under (a) and (b), I shall bring this discussion to an end by quoting the following :—

“Can man live for 800 years ?”

Needs we die ? We all believe that death is inevitable. Biologists tell us that we carry within us the seeds of our decay and natural death is a necessary result of our mode of being.”

Lethal chemical changes begin to work in our bodies from the day of birth and possibly, even in the embryo stage. The ultimate cause of death is possibly poisoning from waste products.

Yet scientists have shown that life is inherently continuous. Paramecium is an animal found in stagnant water. Its body consists of only one cell and because it is so small it cannot be seen except under the microscope. It is significant because it never dies. It lives on by the simple process of dividing itself into two new cells. One biologist who has made a special

study of Paramecia has watched them reproduce themselves by self division through 9,000 generations in $13\frac{1}{2}$ years, comparable with a quarter of a million years of human life. Does this mean that the individual cell is potentially immortal? Perhaps we do not know as yet. Only a few years ago research workers threw away a tissue which had been kept alive and growing since before the first world war.

Complexity of Man.

The complexity of man has proved to be his undoing. We die because one set of bad cells spoil the functioning of even the good cells. Liver cells may fail and bring death to the whole organism even though the cells composing the heart, lungs, and kidney are perfectly able to function for more years. The whole body does not die all at once. A few days after an individual has been declared physically dead, fragments of inner organs have been found fully alive. Each organ in the body dies at its own rate and scientists are beginning to learn details of this fact with the thought of some-day preventing certain types of death.

Life and Temperature.

Just now fast disintegration takes place probably on the basis of temperature. A famous physiologist Jacques Loeb prolonged the life of fruit flies 90 per cent by lowering the breeding temperature by two-thirds. Loeb has estimated that if the temperature of the human body could be lowered to 49.5 degrees F., human life could be extended by 1,900 years. Nature however, maintains an internal temperature of 98.6 degrees for man regardless of whether he be an Eskimo or an inhabitant of the Tropics. New knowledge in the five years about resuscitating persons whose heart stops on the operating table has enabled doctors to postpone death. It has stressed the difference between 'Clinical' death and 'Physiological' death. Many scientists are convinced that even if man cannot realize biological immortality he can postpone death long enough to get far more out of his potential life span than he does now. Some believe 115 years is attainable now provided man can be protected against physical and emotional 'insults' to the body. Dr. Henry S. Cima of Columbia University has computed that, if the human body could retain during the whole of life, the ability to

resist disease and to repair breakdown, that it possesses at the age of 20, man would have a life expectancy of 800 years and some individuals might survive 22,000 years.

Span of Life.

Meanwhile, as this research into the nature of death, which will give us an understanding of the continuity of life, continues we cannot ignore the fact that for the vast majority of people on earth the problem is not whether they will live for centuries but until to-morrow. A US Department of State Report in 1950 stated that in countries such as Egypt and India, where the average expectation of life at birth is about 30 years, only 54 out of every 100 children reach the age of 15 and enter the period of maximum economic productivity. Of those who reach young adulthood all but 15 die or are incapacitated long before completing the normal span of working life at 60. In other more industrially developed countries 92 out of 100 children reach the age of 15, and 70 attain a productive life-span upto the age of 60. It is important to reduce the death rate because it will mean an increase of human resources available for production (in proportion to population). "Given social

and economic improvement", says the World Health Organisation, "people will enjoy a fuller and a richer existence. They will have life and they will have it more abundantly and the study of the humble Paramecium will help to confer 'Immortality' on man". Now, according to the belief of the Shias, I give the following details about Imamate. The Shia belief is that after the prophet there are 12 Caliphs or Imams. The Prophet himself enumerated them, and each Imam also nominated his successor after him. They believe that if anybody except these 12, lay a claim to Imamate, he is not the rightful claimant, and after the 12th Imam those who claim that they are his Deputies are liars.

The Shia belief is that all the Imams are Innocent and their knowledge is drawn from revelations. They are superior to everybody after the Prophet, and those who slander them or who are their enemies, are infidels. There is no particular time fixed for the reappearance of the Twelfth Imam, but some signs have been given on the occurrence of which he will reappear. Among these signs is that there will be a famine in the world for seven long years such that no power on earth will be able to redress it.

At the present time nations regard democracy as the one way of Government which will give peace and amity to people. Aristocracy regards itself as most suitable. Marxism and Communism, view with each other for supremacy. But all the same none of them have been able to establish their definite superiority over the other until to-day. When all these systems fail, and the frustrated politicians acknowledge their helplessness, it will then be for God to come to the relief of humanity and bestow His blessings upon it and that blessings will come in the form of the Imam-i-Zaman.

The Shia belief is that near the reappearance of the 12th Imam, the world will have changed its course of wordly activities to spiritual efforts, and all who lives a life of material prosperity will be inclined to accept spiritual methods.

Apart from these beliefs, other beliefs such as that an Innocent Imam must be bathed and buried only by his like or that after the reappearance and death of the 12th Imam, Hazrat Imam Husain and the Martyrs of Karbala will come to life in this world together with similar principles of Faith, will be dealt with in their proper places.

THE END